

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, in the 3 years since 19 terrorists hijacked 4 planes and changed the course of American history, we have learned much about our vulnerabilities, our strengths, and the steps we must take to protect ourselves.

Tomorrow, America will remember the images of the Twin Towers collapsing, of terrified office workers jumping to their deaths, of brave New York City firefighters rushing into those burning buildings to save people trapped inside, of soot-covered men and women streaming out into the streets dazed and overcome. We will remember the shock of learning that a third plane had smashed into the Pentagon, and a fourth was possibly headed to the White House or the Capitol.

We will remember our sense of helplessness, our horror, and our utter disbelief as the terrible events occurred that bright morning, a morning not too dissimilar to today. In our grief on our day of national mourning, let us also recall our unity and those words of Todd Beamer to his fellow passengers on flight 93: Let's roll.

The highest priority of the Senate is to protect the safety and security of the American people. But as the 9/11 Commission report outlines, before 9/11 we were not attuned to the growing threat of Islamic terror. There had been attacks, and the attacks were growing bolder, but our attention was "sporadic and splintered across several committees."

Mr. President, 9/11 changed everything, and the Senate is committed to reforming its oversight functions so that it can, in the words of the Commission report, provide "strong, stable, and capable congressional committee structure to give America's national intelligence agencies oversight, support, and leadership."

Senator MCCONNELL and Senator REID are leading a leadership-appointed task force which is meeting to hammer out a legislative framework. We plan to consider that legislation no later than October 1. As has been discussed this week, the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee is leading the reorganization of the executive branch. Under the superb leadership of Senator COLLINS and Senator LIEBERMAN, the committee is working diligently to address the Commission's recommendations. They started hearings immediately after those 9/11 recommendations were made to this body and to the country and continued those hearings through August, and now that we are back in session, over the course of this week.

On Wednesday, the Governmental Affairs Committee had another hearing

to discuss options. Those hearings will continue. Senator COLLINS and Senator LIEBERMAN will likely mark up legislation on the week of September 20, and the bill will then be brought to the floor the following week.

These dual efforts—one, the Governmental Affairs Committee dealing with the relationships and the definition and the legislation surrounding the executive branch, and the other led by Senators MCCONNELL and REID, overseeing the reorganization within this body—will present recommendations and that legislation to the U.S. Congress with the goal of strengthening our national security and safeguarding us, the American people, against future acts of terrorism.

The President and his administration, meanwhile, have already begun to address 36 of the remaining 39 recommendations, the last three currently being under study. Two days ago, we had the opportunity to meet with the President, Republican and Democratic leadership from both sides of the aisle in this body meeting with leadership and Members from both sides of the aisle in the House of Representatives, listening to his plans, his vision of intelligence reform.

On the Senate floor yesterday I spoke a little bit about the President's plan to establish a national intelligence director, the NID, to oversee these 15 intelligence agencies that we have. This afternoon, briefly, I would like to highlight the President's action to create a national counterterrorism center. We know that the intelligence community generates massive amounts of information. In the aftermath of 9/11, this point became tragically clear. There had been clues. There had been arrests, analysis, and warnings. But because these pieces of information were scattered across agencies and not properly shared, they became missed opportunities.

In the words of the 9/11 report:

The system of "need to know" should be replaced by a system of "need to share."

The national counterterrorism center President Bush has created by Executive order will act as a central knowledge bank, a clearinghouse where intelligence can be shared across agencies, can be prioritized, analyzed, and used in the field to thwart terrorist attacks. In other words, the left hand will learn what the right hand is doing.

I commend the President on his consistent leadership and his commitment to reforming our intelligence community. He is already transforming the FBI. He has led the most extensive reorganization of the Federal Government in 50 years in the creation of the Homeland Security Department. He recognized immediately that terrorism was not merely a law enforcement issue but a grave threat to America, world peace, instability. It required mobilization of all of our resources.

I look forward to working with my colleagues as we continue to advance America's national security and im-

prove our intelligence functions. The 9/11 Commission report was bipartisan and unanimous. Likewise, I am gratified by my colleagues' sense of unity and shared vision in making America safer sooner rather than later, before "if" becomes "when."

THE THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, 3 years ago this September 11, al-Qaida terrorists launched a brutal attack on American soil. Every American remembers that clear Tuesday morning when two planes smashed into the two World Trade Center towers in New York and brought them crumbling to the ground. A third plane crashed into the Pentagon outside Washington, DC. A fourth plane may have been destined for this very Capitol were it not for the heroic passengers on that flight who put their country ahead of their lives.

Today and every day we honor the innocent victims who died that day while conducting America's business. We also honor the heroic first responders—police officers, firefighters, and emergency medical personnel—who rushed in to save others. We honor the volunteers of that day and every day forward who lined up to help their fellow Americans. Millions donated money, time, efforts, and blood.

And we honor the soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines who have risked their lives so Americans don't have to live in fear of being attacked again. Some have paid the ultimate sacrifice. Our all-volunteer military is the best in the world, and as full of courage as the military heroes from our Greatest Generation.

It is worth looking at what we have accomplished in the last 3 years. President Bush has led America in a global war on terror to destroy those who would attack us again. We have made incredible progress.

We have led an international military coalition to eradicate two of the vilest terrorist regimes on Earth—the Taliban in Afghanistan, and Saddam Hussein in Iraq. We have liberated over 50 million people. Over 10 million have registered to vote in this fall's election in Afghanistan. And Iraq has national elections scheduled for early next year.

Using diplomacy and sanctions, and with the help of the international community, we have pressured a third terrorist regime in Libya to abandon its path to weapons of mass destruction, that could have been given to terrorists. The lesson of Saddam Hussein surely served as an example here, and should continue to serve as such to despots around the globe who would do us harm.

Of the senior al-Qaida leaders, operational managers, and key facilitators that our government has been tracking, nearly two-thirds have been brought to justice or had justice brought to them. And with the help of our allies, we have severely disrupted

the networks and organizations that flow money, supplies, people, and information to the terrorists.

Here at home, the defense and intelligence capabilities of the Federal Government have been reorganized more sweepingly than at any point since the 1940s, to prepare them for this, the first war of the 21st century. We have created a Department of Homeland Security and are currently weighing how best to strengthen our intelligence services to deal with today's threats.

Finally, America has reaffirmed her commitment to liberty across the world. Despite the negative words of a few naysayers in high places, most people around the globe draw strength from America's commitment to lead the global war on terror. Over 30 nations joined us to liberate Afghanistan and Iraq. We have never wavered in our pledge to root out the terrorists and punish the states that may harbor them. The world has been reminded that America lives up to its word.

We have made great progress in 3 years, and will continue to make great progress. The president has told us that this will be a long struggle lasting years, perhaps decades. We cannot be sure when the war may be won. But we can be sure that it will.

For nearly 50 years, America grappled with another seemingly entrenched enemy—the Soviet Union and the spread of communism throughout the world. For much of the cold war, the struggle seemed to be without end. Some said it couldn't be won. Some said coexistence was the best America could hope for. Some even morally equated American freedom with Soviet tyranny, and refused to take sides.

But today, schoolchildren learn that the Soviet Union collapsed, rotten from the inside, as an inevitable fact. We take our victory in the Cold War for granted today, but it took decades of resolve, perseverance, and faith that our way of life was superior to totalitarianism. Well, the American way of freedom—freedom to worship, freedom to speak, freedom to vote—is still the best way of life on Earth.

Today's generation must maintain that same faith. We cannot lose on the battlefield. We cannot lose the war of ideals. As long as we maintain our will to win, we will prevail.

ANNIVERSARY OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I cannot let September 11 pass without reflecting on this painful anniversary, and heralding the strength of our Nation in the three years that have passed since that terrible day.

Three years ago, a global network of terrorists attacked our country, taking the lives of nearly three thousand innocent men, women, and children. Today, we are still angered by the cruelty of these attacks. We are still awed by the courage of our first responders, and of the everyday Americans who were he-

roes on that day, whose acts of bravery and kindness were a source of solace for the Nation in the days after the attacks. Their strength became our strength, and with each passing day, and each passing year, our resolve to stop the forces of terror has only deepened.

This month, as the Senate moves forward to address the critically important recommendations made by the 9/11 Commission, we mark the third year that has passed since the attacks. But this anniversary is not simply about the events of a single day. It is about our continued sadness and grief, and our overwhelming pride in the way our Nation responded to the tragic events of that day. It is also about the abiding strength of our convictions; our deep and profound commitment to fighting the forces of terror, to making our families safer, and to preserving the freedoms at the heart of our national character.

We remember September 11 every day. On this anniversary, we simply share in that remembrance—both with other Americans, and with people around the world who stand with us in the fight against terrorism. Today I pay tribute to the lives we lost, and I honor the men and women across this country who give this Nation its greatest source of strength: our faith in our country, in our communities, and in each other.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

STAFF SERGEANT BRUCE J. POLLEMA

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to SSG Bruce J. Pollema, a fellow Iowan originally from Hull, IA. The Iowa National Guard regrettably announced the death of Staff Sergeant Pollema when he was killed on August 27, 2004 along with fellow soldier, Spc. Dustin S. Colby, when their military motor vehicle rolled over into a ditch near Camp Dodge. Staff Sergeant Pollema was a heavy vehicle operator with the 2168th Transportation Company, based in Sheldon, IA. Staff Sergeant Pollema is survived by his wife, Teri Winter, father and mother, Wilmar and Betty Pollema, his older brother, Waylon, and his twin brother, Brandon. This brave soldier was thirty years old.

The family of Bruce Pollema issued the following statement in response to the news of their son's death: "Our hearts, minds, spirits and prayers are with the rest of the Troops and we wish them God speed. We will be there for them when they come back."

It is fitting that we should honor Staff Sergeant Pollema today for his service to our country. My deepest sympathy goes out to his family and friends. I know his memory will live on in the hearts of everyone he knew.

TIME IS RUNNING SHORT

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, in less than one week, the 1994 assault weap-

ons ban will expire and our Nation will once again be vulnerable to guns known to most in the law enforcement community as "the weapons of choice for criminals." If the ban is allowed to expire on September 13, potential criminals, including terrorists, could have access to 19 of the highest powered and most lethal firearms capable of being produced. These guns have no sporting purpose and no place on our streets.

In addition to banning 19 specific weapons, the current ban also includes prohibitions on semiautomatic weapons that incorporate a detachable magazine and two or more specific military features. These features include folding/telescoping stocks, protruding pistol grips, bayonet mounts, threaded muzzles or flash suppressors, barrel shrouds, or grenade launchers. Common sense should tell us that there is no reason for civilians to have easy access to guns with these features.

Los Angeles Chief of Police Bill Bratton has said the following about these weapons: "Since the Assault Weapons Ban was passed in 1994, we have seen a 66% decline in the frequency of assault weapon use in crime. Violent criminals love these weapons because they give them far more firepower than conventional weapons that greatly increases their capacity to kill. We cannot allow these weapons to get back into their hands."

It is important to listen to Chief Bratton and other law enforcement officials who support an extension of the assault weapons ban. The ban is important for the safety of all Americans but is especially important for the safety of our police officers.

In 1994, I voted for the assault weapons ban and in March of this year I joined a bipartisan majority of the Senate in voting to extend the ban for 10 years. Unfortunately, despite Senate passage of the amendment, it appears that this important gun safety law will be allowed to expire. The House Republican leadership opposes reauthorizing the law and President Bush, though he has said he supports it, has done little to keep the law alive.

Time is running short. We should support our law enforcement officers and reauthorize this common sense ban on assault weapons. Congress needs to act immediately to reauthorize the ban. I ask unanimous consent that a list of some of the organizations supporting this legislation be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the following material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

International Association of Chiefs of Police
Major Cities Chiefs Association
Police Foundation
Police Executive Research Forum
International Brotherhood of Police Officers
National Association of School Resource Officers
National Fraternal Order of Police
National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives
Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association